

Department of State - Global Affairs

Program Office: Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan
Funding Opportunity Title: Establishment of a Media Pool at the Afghan Parliament
Announcement Type: Grant or Cooperative Agreement
Funding Opportunity Number: SCAKAB-11-AW-002-SCA-102110
Deadline for Applications: November 4, 2010
CFDA 15.901

ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility is open to all U.S., Afghan, and international organizations or companies with direct experience in Afghanistan's media environment, an ability to work with and within Afghan government institutions, and a proven track record of success implementing projects in Afghanistan.

Cost Sharing or Matching

This program does not require cost sharing.

Other Special Eligibility Criteria

Not Applicable.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- A) For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726.
- B) For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact **Pamela Mills**, Grants Manager, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan, at:
Email: millspg@state.gov (*Preferred method of communication*)
Phone: +93 (0)700 10 7278 or 301-490-1042 ext. 7278

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan is pleased to announce an open competition for assistance awards through this Request for Proposals (RFP). PAS Kabul invites all eligible organizations to submit a proposal for working with the Afghan Parliament to establish an on-site media pool, which would facilitate coverage of parliamentary debate and activities for broadcast across Afghanistan.

A successful proposal will include a plan for the design and construction of media infrastructure, the purchase, delivery, and installation of required equipment, plus training of parliamentary staff and Afghan media professionals on the proper use and function of the equipment, and on the production of parliamentary debate as content for TV and radio broadcast.

II. BACKGROUND

The development of the media and communications capacity of the Afghan government – and especially publically highlighting the elected Afghan representatives – will serve to support Afghanistan’s young democracy and aid in the dissemination of positive messages on Afghanistan’s progress and development to Afghanistan and around the world.

The Afghan Parliament has expressed an interest in establishing an on-site media pool within the Parliament building to aid and enable press coverage of parliamentary debate and the workings of government. The U.S. embassy in Kabul seeks to support this Afghan initiative via this RFP. Implementation of this project will require close coordination with the Afghan Parliament. Before submitting an application, all potential applicants should contact the Parliament in order to put together a proposal that fits all its requirements.

Objectives

Proposals should address three distinct activities:

- Design, construction, procurement, delivery, and installation of specific equipment and/or infrastructure.
- Training for parliamentary staff on the proper use and maintenance of the equipment.
- Training for Afghan media professionals on the use of the new facilities to produce and package parliamentary content for radio and TV broadcast.

Equipment & Facilities: The Afghan parliament has specific ideas about the equipment and facilities required to establish a media pool. This includes, but is not limited to: the design and installation of a control room and media room, fixed cameras to be installed in the plenary hall, wireless cameras, video and audio mixers, media storage devices, monitors, speakers, cables, panels, and computers and software.

Technical Training: The proposal must include a plan to train the Parliament's technical staff on the proper use and maintenance of all equipment and facilities. Ideally, parliamentary staff would be involved in the project from the design stage in order to acquire intimate and detailed knowledge of every aspect of the equipment, its installation, and its operation.

Media Training: The proposal must include a training component for Afghan media professionals, utilizing existing local trainers and programs, on the production and packaging of parliamentary activities and debate as viable content for TV and radio broadcast (along the C-SPAN model).

III. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligibility is open to all U.S., Afghan, and international organizations or companies with direct experience in Afghanistan's media environment, an ability to work with and within Afghan government institutions, and a proven track record of success implementing projects in Afghanistan (see "Eligibility" on page 1).

Applicants are not required to include funding from other donors. However, applications that include additional in-kind and/or cash contributions from non-U.S. Government sources will be more competitive, since cost-sharing demonstrates a strong commitment to the planned activities and will be considered to show greater cost effectiveness.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Award Period: 12-16 months

Award Amount: Funds available are commensurate with proposed activities.

Application Submission Process: Applicants must submit concept papers electronically using Grants.gov or submit proposals to PAS Kabul directly at:

KabulPDProposals@state.gov. Thorough instructions on the Grants.gov application process are available at <http://www.grants.gov>. For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726. For questions about this solicitation, contact **Pamela Mills**, Grants Manager, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan, at:

Email: millspg@state.gov (*Preferred method of communication*)

Phone: +93 (0)700 10 7278 or 301-490-1042 ext. 7278

Application Deadline: All applications must be submitted on or before November 4, 2010, 11:59 p.m. eastern time. Applications submitted after 11:59 p.m. will be ineligible for consideration. **Begin the application process early**, as this will allow time to address any technical difficulties that may arise in advance of the deadline. There will be no exceptions to this application deadline.

All applicants utilizing Grants.gov must register with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application. **Registering with Grants.gov is a one-time process; however, it could take as long as two weeks to have the registration validated and confirmed. Please begin the registration process immediately to ensure that the process is completed well in advance of the deadline for applications.** Until that process is complete, you will not be issued a user password for Grants.gov, which is required for application submission. There are four steps that you must complete before you are able to register: (1) Obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet (if your organization does not have one already) by calling 1-866-705-5711; (2) Register with Central Contractor Registry (CCR); (3) Register yourself as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR); and (4) Be authorized as an AOR by your organization. For more information, go to www.grants.gov. Please note that your CCR registration must be annually renewed. Failure to renew your CCR registration may prohibit submission of a grant application through Grants.gov.

Application Content: Applicants must follow the RFP instructions and conditions contained herein and supply all information required. **Failure to furnish all information or comply with stated requirements will result in disqualification from the competition.** Applicants must set forth full, accurate, and complete information as required by this RFP. The penalty for making false statements in proposals to the USG is prescribed on 18 U.S.C.1001.

Proposals may not exceed 10 double-spaced pages in 12-point, Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins. This requirement excludes the allowable appendices, which are identified in Section 6 below. The proposal must consist of the following:

Section 1 - Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424):

This form can be found on-line at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/forms.html>.

Section 2 - Abstract:

The abstract is limited to 300 words in length. It must provide a summary of the project to be undertaken, expected timeline, and cost.

Section 3 – Implementation Plan:

The applicant must specify the goals and objectives of the project. The steps involved -- from design to procurement to construction and installation to training -- should be described in sufficient detail to show how objectives and goals will be met. This section should also describe how success will be measured via performance indicators. This section must include a time-task plan that clearly identifies the objectives and major activities.

Section 4 - Organizational Capability:

Applications must include a clear description of the applicant's management structure, previous experience with the media and communications environment in Afghanistan, experience working with Afghan government institutions, and the organizational

experience and background in Afghanistan related to the proposed activities. Besides information about the organization as a whole, this section must also identify the proposed management structure and staffing plan for the proposed project.

Section 5 - Appendices:

The concept paper submission must include two appendices, with a third, optional appendix to be submitted at the discretion of the applicant. Only the appendices listed below may be included as part of the application:

- (a) **Budget (Required)** – the budget must identify the total amount of funding requested, with a breakdown of amounts to be spent in the following budget categories: personnel; fringe benefits; travel; equipment; supplies; consultants/contracts; other direct costs; and indirect costs. The budget may not exceed 1 page in length.
- (b) **Resume (Required)** – a resume, not to exceed 1 page in length, must be included for the proposed key staff person, such as the Project Director. If an individual for this type of position has not been identified, the applicant may submit a 1-page position description, identifying the qualifications and skills required for that position, in lieu of a resume.
- (c) **Letters of Intent (Required)** – for this project, local partnerships, including with the Afghan government, are critical. Letters of intent should be included with the concept paper. The letters must identify the type of relationship to be entered into (formal or informal), the roles and responsibilities of each partner in relation to the proposed project activities, and the expected result of the partnership. Please note that these are not letters of support, and should only be included for those organizations that will play an active role in the project, including those that receive financial support through the project budget. The individual letters cannot exceed 1 page in length, and applicants are limited to submitting up to five letters per proposal.

V. AWARD SELECTION CRITERIA

Evaluation Criteria: Applicants should note that the following criteria (1) serve as a standard against which all proposals will be evaluated, and (2) serve to identify the significant matters that should be addressed in all proposals. The USG will award grants to the applicants whose offers represent the best value to the USG on the basis of technical merit and cost.

Each application will be evaluated by a peer review committee of Department of State and other experts, as deemed appropriate. The evaluation criteria have been tailored to the requirements of this RFP.

- **Project Goals/Implementation Plan (40 points):** Applicants should describe what they propose to do and how they will do it. The proposed activities must

directly relate to meeting the goals and objectives, and applicants should include information on how they will measure activities' effectiveness. The review panel will be viewing the implementation plan in terms of how well it addresses the stated need for monitoring and evaluation, relevance of the goals and objectives, and feasibility of the proposed activities and their timeline for completion.

- **Organizational Capability (40 points):** Proposals should demonstrate the ability to monitor and evaluate content and programming broadcast in Dari and Pashto on Afghan TV and radio, including films. Applicants must demonstrate how their resources, capabilities, and experience will enable them to achieve the stated goals and objectives. In addition, applicants should describe how and with whom they will collaborate to meet project goals.
- **Appendices (20 points):**
 - **Budget:** Costs shall be evaluated for realism, control practices, and efficiency. The Department of State must determine that the costs paid for this award are reasonable, allowable, and allocable to the proposed project activities. This will consist of a review of the Budget to determine if the overall costs are realistic for the work to be performed, if the costs reflect the applicant's understanding of the allowable cost principles established by OMB Circular A-122, and if the costs are consistent with the program narrative.
 - **Resume:** The review panel will consider the appropriateness of the selected project director, in view of the role and responsibility that person will play in guiding the project through implementation to completion. Position descriptions submitted in lieu of the resume will be reviewed for the appropriateness of the qualifications and skills identified.
 - **Letters of Intent:** While submission of Letters of Intent is optional, and applications without will not be penalized, the review panel will favorably view their inclusion. The review panel will consider the types and depth of relationships that the applicant has with local organizations. The panel will also review the letters to determine the willingness of local organizations to participate in the effort, and that all parties have an understanding of their unique roles and responsibilities in terms of the proposed project.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Award Notices: The grant shall be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The Grants Officer is the Government official delegated the authority by the U.S. Department of State Procurement Executive to write, award, and administer grants and cooperative agreements. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the Recipient through either mail or facsimile

transmission. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified in writing.

Anticipated Time to Award: Applicants should expect to be notified if their proposal has been selected for award within 15 days after the submission deadline. PAS Kabul will provide information at the point of notification about any modification to the proposal or plan of work that will be required to finalize the cooperative agreement.

Successful applicants can expect to receive the first installment of funding 30-40 days after the grant is finalized and signed by all parties.

Issuance of this RFP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

- **Reporting Requirements:** Grantees are required to submit quarterly program progress and financial reports throughout the project period. Progress and financial reports are due 30 days after the reporting period. Final programmatic and financial reports are due 90 days after the close of the project period.

VII. DISCLAIMER

If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with the award. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the total discretion of the Department of State.